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COUNTY BOROUGH OF SOUTHPORT.



REPORT

UPON THE

Health and Sanitary Condition

OF THE

County Borough of Southport

For the Year 1942.

*(Including the Thirty-fourth Annual Report of the
School Medical Officer.)*



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COUNTY BOROUGH OF SOUTHPORT.

ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH AND SCHOOL
MEDICAL OFFICER FOR THE YEAR 1942.

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE HEALTH
COMMITTEE.

A brief version of the Annual Report for the year 1942 is set out in the following pages. The facts and figures relating to the work of the department during the year have been recorded and are available for reference.

The general health of the community continues to be good. The year 1942 was remarkable in three respects—namely, the death-rate of 14.6 per 1,000 of the population was the lowest since 1934; the birth-rate of 11.9 per 1,000 of the population was the highest since 1927; and the infantile mortality rate of 38 per 1,000 births was by far the lowest ever recorded in the history of the town.

The standard of services provided by the Health Department continues, it is thought, at a high level and more people than ever before are taking advantage of them. The services provided for the mother and child are being used to an extent undreamed of twenty years ago. Of every 100 expectant mothers nearly 80 undergo their confinement in services provided by the Corporation, i.e., at the Maternity Hospitals or with the help of a Municipal Midwife.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

W. E. FITZGERALD,

Medical Officer of Health and
School Medical Officer.

VITAL STATISTICS.

The following table shows the principal statistics as they relate to the country and includes the comparative figures for Southport. The birth-rate for Southport during 1942 was 11.9 per 1,000 population as compared with 9.94 in 1941. The infant mortality rate was 38 per 1,000 live births, the lowest rate ever recorded in the town. The figure for 1940 was 43 and for 1941, 57.

The death-rate was 14.6 per 1,000 population as compared with 14.8 in the previous year. In this connection it should be remembered that the population is still heavily weighted in the higher age groups.

BIRTH-RATES, DEATH-RATES, ANALYSIS OF MORTALITY, MATERNAL MORTALITY AND CASE RATES FOR CERTAIN INFECTIOUS DISEASES IN THE YEAR 1942.

Provisional figures based on Weekly and Quarterly Returns.

	England and Wales.	126 C.Bs. and Great Towns including London.	148 Smaller Towns Resident Pop. 25,000-50,000 1931 Census.	London Adm. County.	Southport.
Rates per 1,000 Population.					
Live Births	15.8	17.3	18.4	14.0	11.9
Still Births	0.54	0.66	0.62	0.48	0.41
<i>Deaths :—</i>					
All Causes	11.6	13.3	12.1	13.9	14.6
Typhoid and Paratyphoid	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	—
Smallpox	—	—	—	—	—
Measles	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.03
Scarlet Fever	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	—
Whooping Cough	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.04	—
Diphtheria	0.05	0.06	0.04	0.02	0.06
Influenza	0.09	0.09	0.10	0.07	0.09
<i>Notifications :—</i>					
Smallpox	0.00	0.00	—	0.00	—
Scarlet Fever	2.19	2.49	2.34	1.86	1.29
Diphtheria	1.05	1.35	0.91	0.76	1.12
Typhoid Fever	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.02	—
Paratyphoid Fever	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.02
Erysipelas	0.30	0.36	0.26	0.43	0.27
Pneumonia	1.07	1.30	0.94	0.94	1.02
Cerebro-Spinal Fever	0.14	0.17	0.12	0.15	0.13
Whooping Cough	1.73	1.97	1.58	2.72	1.77
Measles	7.46	9.27	7.39	8.62	12.06
Rates per 1,000 Live Births :—					
Deaths under 1 year of age	49	59	46	60	38
Deaths from Diarrhoea and Enteritis under 2 years of age	5.2	7.5	4.8	8.6	—
Rates per 1,000 Total Births (Live and Still) :—					
<i>Maternal Mortality :</i>					
Puerperal Sepsis	0.42				0.90
Others	1.59		Not available		1.80
TOTAL	2.01				2.70
<i>Notifications :—</i>					
Puerperal Fever	12.61	15.94	10.80	17.69	22.03
Puerperal Pyrexia					

A dash (—) signifies that there were no deaths.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

Water.—The exceptionally high state of organic purity of the water supply was maintained.

Drainage and Sewerage.—No cesspools were abolished in 1942. The number of houses in the Borough still served by cesspools is 160.

Sanitary Inspection.—The Chief Sanitary Inspector and his staff made 26,626 visits of inspection during the year. Of these, 1,338 were made as a result of complaints received from the public. The routine inspection of premises accounted for 3,067 visits. Sanitary defects remedied were as follows:—Houses redrained or drains amended, 175; building and altering w.c.'s, 150; miscellaneous nuisances remedied, 1,383. In the abatement of nuisances, 1,369 were reported and appropriately dealt with.

HOUSING.

Nothing occurred during the year in connection with housing conditions which deserves special mention. The highest standard of co-operation between owners and the officers of the department in regard to house repairs was maintained; polite but insistent firmness on the part of officers does much to avoid a situation which otherwise might result in legal proceedings being taken to enforce the demands of the department. Some instances of overcrowding were discovered and these were abated.

SUPERVISION OF FOOD SUPPLIES.

Milk.—There were 110 dairymen (excluding purveyors of bottled milk) in the Borough on the 31st December, 1942. Forty-two of these are also producers of which only 3 produce milk on licence granted under the terms of the Milk (Special Designations) Order, 1936.

At the end of the year the number of milk purveyors entitled to sell pasteurised milk by licence was 24.

The number of samples of milk taken for chemical analysis was 180, and of these 171 were genuine.

Nine samples were taken which proved not to be genuine. It was necessary to institute legal proceedings in 2 cases.

The number of samples of milk taken for bacteriological examination totalled 152. One hundred and fourteen of these were of milk supplies from sources inside the Borough, and 38 from outside the Borough. None was tuberculous.

Numerous further complaints about the milk supplies were received during the summer months of 1942, particularly with regard to souring. Owing to the unavoidable delay in the preparation of this report it is possible to say that the poor state of the milk supplies to the town continued, and numerous bitter complaints have been made, particularly during the months of June, July and August of 1943.

One of the arguments which was levelled against pasteurisation was that it would tend to discourage the production of clean milk, because a dirty milk so treated could be safely distributed.

Some of those who actually have used this argument have found that this is not the case. Pasteurisation will not save a milk which, owing to poor methods of production, is near the souring stage. Pasteurisation was never intended to be used as a commercial method for the purpose of treating a dirty milk so that souring is delayed sufficiently to permit delivery

of the milk in an unclotted state. This can be done and, under the present conditions of "block" delivery, the consumer who complains has little redress, for he is fixed with his supplier for the war period. It is to be hoped that at the earliest possible moment the block scheme of distribution will be abolished as an infringement on the general liberty of the individual.

Pasteurisation should be used for the purpose for which it was intended, to make the milk supply safe and to prevent milk borne disease.

This presupposes a raw milk produced by clean and wholesome methods, rapid delivery after milking to the pasteurising plant, and rapid delivery after pasteurisation to the consumer. This is the only way in which a wholesome and safe supply can be ensured.

Since the war started the principle of one collection each day from the dairy farms has been instituted, and a great part of the milk delivered at the dairies throughout the country is already 12-24 or more hours old. In the summer months particularly milk deteriorates seriously because of this delay and one crying need to-day, apart from the necessary improvements in production methods, must be a double delivery. That is to say that the milk at the farms should be collected as soon as possible after each milking and taken to the dairies. This means a release of petrol for the purpose, and a provision of the necessary man-power to work the transport required.

The visits of Inspection in connection with the supervision of food are as follows:—Public slaughter-houses, 821; private slaughter-houses, nil; butchers' shops, 2,636; fish and poultry shops, 1,444; other shops, 3,135; restaurants, etc., 149; ice cream workshops; 51; ice cream stalls, 134; potted meat and fish works, 505; piggeries, 93; milk farms, 3; private premises where pigs were killed, 100; total, 9,071.

HOSPITAL ACCOMMODATION.

The table to be found on page 7 gives details of the admissions and discharges to the hospitals which are under the control of the Health Committee.

The New Hall Wigan Camp Annexe was closed on November 17th, 1942, but the number of beds lost by this closure was compensated for by the addition of 32 beds at New Hall hospital. These beds are contained in huts supplied by the Ministry of Health; one ward containing 20 beds and the other containing cubicles with 12 beds. Apart from this no change took place in the hospital accommodation provided, and the figures included in last year's Annual Report are to that extent correct.

The need for additional accommodation for the aged and chronic sick became more apparent during the year; a normal accommodation of 62 beds has had to be increased to 72 by squeezing extra beds in to the available space, a feature which, it is hoped, is to be no more than a temporary arrangement. Notwithstanding these additional beds the number of Southport patients at the Ormskirk County Hospital waiting for transfer to Fleetwood Road Hospital continued throughout the year at a higher level than hitherto. The department has also received a number of requests for direct admission to Fleetwood Road Hospital. Direct admission to Fleetwood Road Hospital, however, has been reserved for those patients who are in such a condition of health as to make the longer journey to Ormskirk undesirable.

CORPORATION HOSPITALS.

ADMISSIONS, DISCHARGES, ETC., 1942.

Name of Hospital.	Type of Patient.	No. in Hospital, 31/12/41.	Admitted.	Dis-charged.	Died	In Hospital, 31/12/42.
New Hall	Diphtheria	28	102	119	8	3
	Scarlet Fever	25	104	126	—	3
	C.S. Fever	2	15	14	3	—
	Measles	—	12	10	1	1
	Paratyphoid	1	3	3	—	1
	Puerperal Pyrexia	—	10	10	—	—
	Chickenpox	—	5	3	—	2
	Obs. & O.D.	7	166	164	3	6
		63	418	449	16	16
	Tuberculosis	23	54	33	14	30
New Hall Annexe (1)	Diphtheria	20	42	62	—	—
	Scarlet Fever	13	7	20	—	—
	Obs. & O.D.	—	29	29	—	—
	Whooping Cough.....	3	17	20	—	—
	German Measles	—	2	2	—	—
	Chicken Pox.....	—	24	24	—	—
	Measles	—	57	57	—	—
	Pneumonia	—	1	—	1	—
Fleetwood Road Hospital	Aged and Chronic Sick	66	42	11	28	69
		—	45	45	—	—
V.D. & Skin Hospital	V.D. or Skin Out-patient	283	208	196	*40	255
Pochin Home.....	Skin	28	323	335	—	16
Ormskirk C. Hospital (2)	Hospital Wards	52	246	233	—	65
	Pavilion	42	60	57	—	45
Christiana Hartley	Maternity Hospital	21	566	568	1	18
St. Katherine's	Do.	5	231	229	—	7
Red House	Do.	11	175	181	1	4

* Transfers.

(1) Annexe closed, November 17th, 1942.

(2) Ormskirk County Hospital is administered by the Lancashire County Council.

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE.

Ante- and Post-Natal Clinics.—There are three ante-natal clinics. Two of these are held at the Christiana Hartley Maternity Hospital and one at 44, Hoghton Street. Twelve hundred and seventeen mothers attended the ante-natal clinics. This number represents 87 per cent. of the total number of women confined during the year.

One post-natal clinic is held at 44, Hoghton Street at which all mothers are invited to attend during the four weeks following the lying-in period. Two hundred and thirty-four mothers attended during the year. This number represents an increase in attendance which shows that this essential service is becoming appreciated.

The distribution of additional clothing coupons to expectant mothers was entrusted by the Board of Trade to the Health Departments. This was an interesting development, and is in effect the nearest approach to compulsory notification of pregnancy that has ever been envisaged. It was always felt that compulsory notification of pregnancy was a desirable need, as being the only way in which the department could become aware of all the women in the town who needed the help, advice and benefit of the Corporation's Maternity Services. The clothing coupon system, as applied to expectant mothers, was successful in bringing these mothers to the health department, and so within the scope of the Corporation's ante-natal and maternity services. This temporary advantage has now been lost because the system has been altered, the coupons being issued by the Food Office.

Midwifery.—Thirty-one midwives notified their intention to practise in the area of the local authority. Four of these were engaged in the Municipal Midwifery Service, which dealt with 180 cases. In 159 of these the midwife was in complete charge of the case, and in 21 instances the midwife attended as a maternity nurse. The municipal midwives made 173 first visits to expectant mothers which, with re-visits, made a total of 2,273 visits. The total number of nursing visits amounted to 3,247.

Fourteen midwives were attached to lying-in hospitals in the town, which dealt with 926 births. Nine of the midwives in private practice were responsible for the care of 129 cases, acting in the capacity of midwife in 59 of this number and as maternity nurses in the remainder. Doctors delivered 40 domiciliary cases with the assistance of someone other than one of the nine midwives referred to.

Of the 19 Nursing Homes in the County Borough 11 are registered for the admission of maternity cases; 172 births occurred in these maternity homes.

Analgesia.—Arrangements were completed during the year 1942 for equipping the Maternity Hospitals belonging to the Corporation and also the midwives in the Municipal Midwifery Service with outfits for the administration of Gas/Air Analgesia. Such apparatus was provided at the Christiana Hartley Maternity Hospital at the time of its opening, but now there is a similar outfit at the Red House Emergency Maternity Hospital and at St. Katherine's. Expectant mothers are provided with a Certificate within one month of their confinement certifying whether or not they may receive Analgesia. Thus Analgesia is available for all expectant mothers who make use of the Corporation's Maternity Services, and it will be seen from the paragraph below that nearly 80 per cent. of babies born in Southport come within these services.

Notification of Births.—Of the 1,396 births which took place in Southport, the following table shows (a) that 362, or 26 per cent., of them were born to mothers not ordinarily resident in the Borough; (b) that 925, or 66 per cent., were born in maternity hospitals controlled by the Corporation; and (c) by including the Municipal Midwifery Service that 1,104, or 79 per cent., took place in services provided and controlled by the Corporation.

	Live-births.	Still-births.	Total.	Southport.	Others.
Christiana Hartley Maternity Hosp.	523	19	542	408	134
St. Katharine's E.M. Hospital.....	206	2	208	119	89
Red House E.M. Hospital	162	8	170	79	91
Municipal Midwives	176	3	179	171	8
Domiciliary Private Midwives	103	8	111	107	4
Nursing Homes	170	2	172	143	29
Skin Hospital	5	—	5	1	4
Other	7	2	9	6	3
	1352	44	1396	1034	362

Welfare Centres.—There are five in the town, and the table below shows the attendances at each of these during the year 1942, with the exception of the attendances of mothers and children evacuated from other areas, the figures for which are combined and shown separately. Dried milk under the National Milk Scheme and cod liver oil and fruit juices under the Vitamin Scheme of the Ministry of Food are issued at these Centres. Clerical and other help are provided by the members of the Voluntary Child Welfare Committee, which continues to play an important part in the infant welfare work in the town.

**TOTAL NUMBER OF ATTENDANCES AT THE SOUTHPORT WELFARE CENTRES
FOR THE YEAR 1942.**

NAME OF CENTRE	ATTENDANCES							
	Nursing Mothers		Expectant Mothers		Infants		Children over 1 and under 5	
	1st Visits	Re- Visits	1st Visits	Re- Visits	1st Visits	Re- Visits	1st Visits	Re- Visits
Hampton Road	192	3,964	22	82	195	2,977	3	1,152
High Park	166	3,226	6	17	150	2,453	18	1,073
Liverpool Road	171	3,362	4	1	159	2,764	20	1,179
Crossens	104	2,494	—	—	104	1,508	5	1,154
Hoghton Street	138	2,625	9	3	127	2,003	16	844
Totals	771	15,671	41	103	735	11,705	62	5,402
Evacuees	106	2,359	8	25	81	1,686	37	1,141
Grand Totals	877	18,030	49	128	816	13,391	99	6,543

Health Visitors.—Two additional Health Visitors, making a total of 12, were included in the staff during 1942 because of the extra work due to the war. Their duties, like the permanent members of the staff, include those of School Nurse. During 1942, 353 visits were paid to expectant mothers, of which 122 were first visits. In the case of children under one year the total visits came to 7,356, of which 1,113 were first visits. The total number of visits between the ages of one and five was 9,562; 147 additional visits were paid to boarded-out children, and 133 visits to nurse children.

Home Help.—This service has been continued. A full-time Help is now employed in addition to those women who are on the list for Home Help duties when needed.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Diphtheria.—One hundred and five cases were notified during the year as suffering from this disease, as compared with 234 in 1941. The cases were scattered and there was no localised outbreak. The disease varied in severity, but approximately a third of the patients exhibited clinical signs of the disease which indicated a “gravis” infection. One hundred and two persons were admitted to the isolation hospital, and there were 8 deaths from this disease.

Scarlet Fever.—The incidence of this disease was low. One hundred and seventeen cases were notified, as compared with 381 in the previous year. One hundred and four of these cases were admitted to the isolation hospital and all were of a very mild type.

Enteric Group.—No case of typhoid fever was notified during the year, but 2 cases of paratyphoid fever were notified and were admitted to hospital.

Dysentery.—Only 1 case of dysentery was notified and was treated at home. The Sonne type of organism was isolated in this case.

Erysipelas.—Twenty-five cases were notified but all were treated at home by their own medical attendants.

Measles and German Measles.—One thousand and ninety-two cases of Measles were notified during the twelve months and 122 cases of German Measles. Twelve patients suffering from the former disease were admitted to the isolation hospital because of the severity of the disease or the difficulty of nursing the patient at home. The greatest incidence of Measles occurred during the months of April, May, June and July; 1 death occurred in hospital and was due to complications.

Whooping Cough.—One hundred and sixty-three cases were notified, but all were treated at home; no deaths occurred ascribable to this disease.

Cerebro-spinal Fever.—Thirteen cases were notified, as compared with 36 in the previous year. All the cases were admitted to the isolation hospital, and there were 3 deaths due to this disease.

Undulant Fever.—Two cases were notified during the year.

Chicken-pox.—There were 76 notifications of this disease during the year.

Ophthalmia Neonatorum.—One case was notified, a baby, born at a nursing home, which was treated successfully before discharge.

Malaria.—Ten cases were notified, but in every case the disease had been contracted while on service abroad.

Puerperal Fever and Puerperal Pyrexia.—In all there were 23 notifications of Puerperal Pyrexia, as compared with 25 in the previous year. Seven of these cases occurred in a lying-in hospital early in May. Haemolytic Streptococci were isolated from cervical swabs in six cases and from the throat of the seventh case.

Two of the women concerned were acutely ill for a period of 48 hours, but the condition in each case yielded rapidly to treatment with sulphonamide drugs.

The source of the infection was an infected sore on the scrotum of an infant, who had been retained on that account in the nursery.

The method by which the infection was carried was not clearly ascertained, though it was almost certainly carried on the rubber gloves

used by the staff. A more satisfactory system of glove disinfection was instituted, and no further cases developed. The infant responsible was sent home. The outbreak gave further evidence of the importance of transferring any infective case, however mild, to some other institution or to the home without delay.

IMMUNISATION AGAINST DIPHTHERIA.

The campaign of protecting children against diphtheria continued at a good pace throughout the year, and 1,498 children were immunised, as compared with 1,985 in the year 1941. On the 31st December, 1942, the position was that 2,046 children under 5 years of age had been so protected, giving a percentage of 47.7 per cent., and 6,124 children between 5 and 15 years with a better proportion of 73.9 per cent. The total percentage of children under 15 years was roughly 66 per cent., a figure which has been well increased since that date.

Special action was taken following the Minister of Health's appeal, made in October, 1942, that the full co-operation of Health Visitors should be gained in the immunisation campaign. The Health Visitors were provided with lists of unimmunised children under five years of age and instructed to make special efforts in respect to these. This special campaign had the effect of raising the number of immunisations in children under five from 2,046 on the 31st December, 1942, to 2,532 on the 30th June, 1943, a rate of increase never before experienced.

Another special effort worthy of mention is that carried on in the schools during the winter months when, with the full co-operation of the Head Teachers, more than 1,500 children were immunised. The value of seeking the voluntary co-operation of the Head Teachers has been proved beyond measure, and this has been followed up by further consultation with Head Teachers in the establishment of an annual review of the immunisation position in each school. In the autumn term each class teacher will review his or her class, summarising the position under the following five headings: (a) number in the class, (b) number immunised, (c) number unimmunised, (d) immunisation percentage, and (e) list of names and addresses of those children under category (c), i.e., those not immunised. These class reviews are summarised to show the percentage for the school by the Head Teacher, who in turn sends the information to the Health Centre where, firstly, the figures for all schools are tabulated and, secondly, the Health Visitors instructed to visit the homes of the unimmunised children.

This in addition to the work that is done for the under five-year-olds will prove an excellent annual sweep. Now that the percentage immunised is nearing 75 per cent. the value of the widespread general propaganda campaigns so successful in the past ceases to be commensurate with the return and future effort must of necessity be designed, firstly, to deal with new babies, i.e., one-year-olds, and, secondly, to deal with the hard core which is left of all other age groups.

CASES OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE NOTIFIED DURING 1942.

Disease.	Southport.	Others.	Total.	Deaths in Notified Cases.
Diphtheria	78	27	105	8
Scarlet Fever	99	18	117	—
Pneumonia	88	2	90	1
Measles	955	137	1,092	1
German Measles	109	13	122	—
Chicken Pox	539	137	676	—
Whooping Cough	133	30	163	—
C.S. Meningitis	13	—	13	3
Puerperal Pyrexia	20	3	23	—
Undulant Fever	1	1	2	—
Paratyphoid	2	—	2	—
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	1	—	1	—
Erysipelas	24	1	25	—
Malaria	10	—	10	—
Dysentery	1	—	1	—
	2,073	369	2,442	13

SCABIES ORDER, 1941.

The number of children attending the clinics and diagnosed as suffering from Scabies was 276 Southport cases and 188 Evacuees, a total of 464.

Of the 464, 77 were treated at the School Clinics, 186 were admitted to the Sick Bay in Roe Lane, and 201 were treated at the Pilkington Road Skin Department (125 as out-patients and 76 as in-patients).

In addition, 53 adults were examined and treated, 10 males and 43 females.

As in other branches of Public Health work the co-operation of the public is needed if satisfactory results are to be achieved in the operation of the Scabies Order. During the year the need for the insistence of a wholesome standard of cleanliness amongst the female staffs of some business firms became apparent. In these days it should be recognised by the heads of firms who employ numbers of women and young girls that the standard of cleanliness of their staff must have a certain amount of publicity value. In some instances this standard can hardly be said to be even reasonable. This problem is of more importance to firms who specialise in the manufacture or preparation of foodstuffs.

In these days it is recognised that it is well nigh impossible to lay down conditions of conduct, but it is to be hoped that after the war no person will be allowed to handle foodstuffs unless his or her state of personal cleanliness is of a high standard. In the meantime, the responsible heads of such firms should interest themselves in the matter and endeavour to attain as high a standard as possible. The Health Visitors have en-

deavoured to assist in this work by examination of employees and advice on personal hygiene. Sometimes this help is welcomed, sometimes it is not, but the facts as they are known point to a state of affairs which leaves a great deal to be done, and in some instances provide grounds for serious criticism.

TUBERCULOSIS.

The number of cases of pulmonary tuberculosis notified during the year 1942 was 74, as compared with 56 in the previous year, and an average of 50 for the ten years 1933 to 1942 inclusive. The number of admissions and discharges in the New Hall Sanatorium are shown in the table on page 7. The accommodation at the Sanatorium of 36 beds, including 6 huts which it is not possible to use on occasions during the winter months, was used sparingly so that only those cases most likely to benefit from sanatorium treatment were admitted.

There were 28 new non-pulmonary cases, a number which is one less than the average of 29 for the past ten years. Fortunately little difficulty was experienced in securing hospital treatment for this type of case for which, apart from some provision for surgical cases in the Infirmary, dependance is placed on hospitals belonging to other Authorities.

At the end of the year 1942, there were 310 cases in the Dispensary Register, as compared with 297 twelve months before. The Dispensary at 44, Hoghton Street continues to work well notwithstanding difficult conditions.

The Southport Voluntary Tuberculosis Care Committee continues to do good work and its valuable place in the forces engaged in the fight against tuberculosis is deserving of acknowledgment. Twenty-seven households were assisted in one form or another and for varying purposes during the year. The recipients of this help were generally very appreciative of the assistance given.

VENEREAL DISEASES.

At the end of 1942, 255 persons were under treatment, as compared with 281 twelve months before. The new cases are classified as follows: Syphilis, 25 males, 19 females; gonorrhoea, 42 males, 39 females; non-venereal, 26 males, 44 females; total 195 persons.

The attendance at the Out-patient Department totalled 9,536, as against 9,299 in the previous year. Forty-two patients were admitted for in-patient treatment. Five maternity cases were dealt with; a full-term, healthy infant was born in each case.

BLIND WELFARE.

At the beginning of 1942 there were 149 blind persons on the Register. During the year 24 names were added, 18 new cases and 6 transfers from other areas. Seven blind persons died. The total of 166 on the Register at the end of the year may be classified as follows: (a) 64 males and 102 females, (b) 2 under 16 years of age; 13 in the group 21 to 40 years; 16 between 40 and 50 years; 43 between 50 and 65 years; 19 between 65 and 70 years; 70, 70 years and over; and 3 persons whose ages are not known.

The Home Teacher paid 1,840 visits to blind persons in their homes, and 110 classes for instruction were held. Forty-eight social gatherings were arranged.

At the end of the year 94 of the blind persons on the Register were receiving weekly grants, and during the year the total grants amounted to £4,166. Fifteen blind persons are resident in approved Institutions for the Blind.

SCHOOL MEDICAL SERVICE.

Medical Inspection in School.

All schools, both elementary and higher, were visited for medical inspection during the year—the first time that this has been possible since the outbreak of war.

In the Elementary Schools, entrants only, i.e., those not previously examined in a Southport school, were given a complete routine examination. This number was 1,437, including 48 evacuated children. At the same time, every other child was examined by the Health Visitor and, where necessary, referred to the Medical Officer. The Health Visitor's examination included testing of vision of children of eight years of age, and of all those wearing glasses. From this survey, 1,869 Southport children and 289 evacuated children were referred for a medical opinion.

Nutrition.—The percentages falling into the four nutritional groups are always a matter of interest, and in 1942 showed a slightly less favourable picture than in previous years.

	Children examined during the year.	PERCENTAGE			
		Excellent.	Normal.	Slightly Sub-normal.	Bad.
1942	1,437	4.5	81.2	14.4	—
1941	1,983	7.8	84.5	7.6	0.15
1940	2,749	7.6	83.4	8.7	0.29
1939	1,812	10.3	82.9	6.7	0.11
1938	2,221	8.1	83.6	8.1	0.18

The reasons for the increased percentage of children falling into the "slightly sub-normal" group may be many. It has always been recognised that changes in the examining staff may cause slight variations, but probably a more important factor is the difference in the age constitution of the sample of children included. The inspection in the year 1942 included many more young children, and for several years before the war, it was pointed out that the nutritional condition of the youngest school children lagged behind that of the older ages. In 1942 those examined in the older groups were for the most part slightly heavier than the corresponding groups in 1938. At the same time any tendency to an increase in the number of children showing slight signs of malnutrition, should be a signal for increased care. The only means by which the majority of school children can get extra rations, is by the taking of milk and meals at school. The amount of school feeding has grown considerably, but is still very far short of what the Board of Education aims at. The facilities for meals are, generally-speaking, good, but an increase in the number taken, will always depend on the popularity they enjoy with both parents and children. Some large families might benefit by meals given at half-price.

Cleanliness.—The pre-war condition of cleanliness of the hair has not yet been regained, in spite of increased supervision. At routine inspection 11 per cent. were found to have nits or vermin in the hair, compared with 6 per cent. in 1938. This is a disappointing figure, particularly when it is remembered that no child is now allowed to enter a new school until the hair is clean. Conditions of war, overcrowding in the home and particularly of the sleeping space, together with the fact that a larger number of women are going to work, and have less time to devote to their children, make it very difficult to improve this state of affairs. School Nurses made 21,548 inspections for cleanliness during the year.

Treatment Clinics.—The treatment clinics are used to an increasingly great extent. There were 2,813 attendances at the Minor Ailment Clinic, 1,947 at the Skin Clinic, and 14,010 at the Nurses' daily treatment clinic. Skin diseases are still more prevalent than in the years before the war. Of these, the most troublesome is Scabies. Two hundred and twenty-seven new cases attended in 1942. Their treatment was greatly facilitated in bad cases by admission to the Sick Bay for Skin Diseases. Too often, however, a child discharged cured would shortly return with a re-infection, showing the great need for the following up of possible cases in the home.

The work of the School Dental Service during the year 1942 included the routine dental inspection of 5,750 children, and 976 children were examined as "Specials," making a total of 6,726, of which 5,096 were found to require treatment. The number actually treated was 3,345.

